

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. through 29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) A ~~hot-fill container having a head-space substance-free area, the container~~ comprising:

a container body fillable with a substance below the head-space area and heated at an ~~above ambient first temperature;~~

a closure capping the heated body, at least one of the closure and body having a through-going hole opening at inner and outer ends thereof into respective inner and outer surfaces of the at least one of the closure and body;

a hydrophobic air permeable membrane secured to the inner surface and closing the inner end of the hole; and

an air tight seal permanently closing the outer end of the hole ~~upon cooling the body to an ambient temperature lower than the first temperature.~~

31. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 30 wherein the air tight seal extends from the air permeable membrane within the hole and terminates flush with the outer surface of the at least one of the closure and body.

32. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 30 wherein hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises polypropylene or expanded polytetrafluoro-ethylene.

33. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.3 to 5 microns.

34. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.4 to 2 microns.

35. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.5 to 1.5 microns.

36. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores having an average of about 1.0 micron.

37. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the hole is sized between about 50 and 100 microns.

38. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises a dryable coating.
39. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 38 wherein the dryable coating comprises a UV activated sealant.
40. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 38 wherein the dryable coating comprises a paint.
41. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises a semi-transparent adhesive.
42. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises an air tight membrane with a pressure-sensitive adhesive on one surface thereof.
43. (Original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises a composition which solidifies upon exposure to actinic radiation.
44. - 57. (Cancelled)
58. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 30, wherein the air tight seal extends atop the outer surface of the at least one of the closure and body and covers the outer end of the hole.
59. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 30, wherein the hole extends through the body and is spaced from the closure, the air tight seal being supported by the air permeable membrane and extending therefrom within the hole so as to terminate flush with the outer surface of the body.
60. (Currently Amended) A ~~hot-fill container having a head-space substance-free area, the container comprising:~~
 a container body ~~fillable with a substance below the head-space area and heated at an above-ambient first temperature;~~
 a closure capping the ~~heated~~ body, at least one of the closure and body having a through-going hole opening at inner and outer ends thereof into respective inner and outer surfaces of the at least one of the closure and body;
 a hydrophobic air permeable membrane secured to the inner surface and closing the inner end of the hole; and
 an air-impermeable sealing material irremovably contained within the hole to provide an air-tight seal over the air permeable membrane.

61. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 60 wherein the sealing material is essentially flush with the outer surface of the at least one of the closure and body.

62. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 60 wherein the sealing material extends from the air permeable membrane within the hole and terminates flush with the outer surface of the at least one of the closure and body.

63. (Currently Amended) A ~~hot-fill container having a head-space substance-free area, the container comprising:~~

~~a body fillable with a substance below the head-space area and heated at an above ambient first temperature, the body~~ having a through-going hole opening at inner and outer ends thereof into respective inner and outer surfaces of the body;

a closure capping the ~~heated~~ body, wherein the hole is spaced from the closure;

a hydrophobic air permeable membrane secured to the inner surface and closing the inner end of the hole; and

an air tight seal closing the outer end of the hole ~~upon cooling the body to an ambient temperature lower than the first temperature.~~

64. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 63 wherein the air tight seal is supported by the air permeable membrane and extends therefrom within the hole so as to terminate flush with the outer surface of the body.

65. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 63, wherein the air tight seal extends atop the outer surface of the body and covers the outer end of the hole.

66. (Currently Amended) A ~~hot-fill container having a head-space substance-free area, the container comprising:~~

~~a body fillable with a substance below the head-space area and heated at an above ambient first temperature, the body~~ having a through-going hole opening at inner and outer ends thereof into respective inner and outer surfaces of the body;

a closure capping the ~~heated~~ body, wherein the hole is spaced from the closure;

a hydrophobic air permeable membrane secured to the inner surface and closing the inner end of the hole; and

an air-impermeable sealing material irremovably contained within the hole to provide an air-tight seal over the air permeable membrane.

67. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 66 wherein the sealing material is essentially flush with the outer surface of the body.

68. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 66 wherein the sealing material is supported by the air permeable membrane and extends therefrom within the hole so as to terminate flush with the outer surface of the body.

69. (New) A hot-fill container comprising:

- a body having an open mouth and a through-going hole opening at inner and outer ends thereof into respective inner and outer surfaces of the body;

- a closure capping the body;

- a hydrophobic air permeable membrane secured to the inner surface and closing the inner end of the hole; and

- an air-impermeable sealing material irremovably contained within the hole to provide an air-tight seal over the air permeable membrane.